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foreign to those they have been accustomed to at home. From the outset they are liable to be victimized by being insidiously encouraged by interested persons to pursue, at a heavy expense for years, studies to fit them for the operatic stage, only at last, after paying an extravagant fee for a *début* trial, to utterly fail, either from absolute inability or through the plots of jealous rivals. They may then find themselves destitute in a foreign land, beset by temptations and poverty. Several sad cases of shipwrecked fortunes and character in this class having come to my own personal knowledge, it is my opinion that none, unless she possesses unquestionable talent and voice, and has sufficient means to render her entirely independent of the result, should make this venture in Italy. For every success there are many failures; at the same time, when the conditions are favorable, there is no country that has such great facilities for the training of an opera singer, and the beginning of a successful career.

It is true there have been examples of remarkable and praiseworthy success under most adverse circumstances, due entirely to the energy and ability displayed by the young ladies themselves. In thus plainly presenting the disadvantages and trials which all must more or less meet, I do not wish to discourage anyone from attempting a professional career in Italy, but only to state the adverse facts for the consideration of the persons most interested.

JOHN SCHUYLER CROSBY.

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#### FARM ORGANIZATION.

THE farmer of to-day finds himself the subject of much discussion. By one class of writers it is argued that legislation is to blame for his pitiable condition; by another, that it is the result of his own laziness and improvidence. Let us look at this last charge. How many farmers are there who do not spend the most of the working days in hard toil? It seems to my observation, at least, that it is not more work and less leisure that is needed, but more intelligence, more time spent in the cultivation of the mind and in the study of right methods. We hear argued on every side that in the trades intelligent laborers accomplish more work with less expenditure of time and energy than ignorant, uninformed workmen. If this is true in manufactories, it is equally true in agriculture. The fact that a man resides in the country and gets his living by working in harmony with nature and nature's laws is not a just reason for shutting him out from the world of intellectual effort.

We would not think that the farmer of this country, in order to become successful in obtaining a comfortable living, to care for his own and add to the welfare of his country, must have his eyes forever fastened on his task and his thoughts directed to nothing beyond or above it. The man who has worked from sunrise to sunset five days in the week has a right to spend the sixth as he chooses. But if he be helped to the cultivation of intellect and taste, to the spirit of inquiry, and be put in the way of general culture, then indeed will his holidays—his few hours of rest—be well spent.

He has lately awakened to the fact that while labor in every other department is organized, while the combinations of capital are firm and invincible, he alone depends upon himself; and here lies his much extolled independence. He alone is at the mercy of all others, and to become able to compete in a fair field with his oppressor he must unite with those who are

in the same situation. Already has the wisdom of the farmer's choice been seen in the unusual interest taken in his demands and opinions, in the efforts of political parties and others affected to either placate the organization of the farmers or to cry it down. We hear prophecies of the organization's inevitable shortness of life, and all sorts of statements as to its inability to cope with the questions and issues it proposes to handle. It is said that it does not embody a national idea,—that no organization that is not founded upon a national principle can live long; also, that it is in the interest of a class, and therefore bound to go down. The truth or falsity of all this must depend upon what we consider our nation to be. Is it not for the people, and do we not claim equal rights for all, special privileges to none?

Look at our body of laws to-day. What are the farmer's rights and privileges? He has the right to sell his products at prices fixed for him in New York and Liverpool; the right to buy what he cannot produce at prices dictated to him by manufacturers and middlemen without limit; but no voice in either case in determining either price or profits. He pays one-half of the taxes, but a glance at our national Congress shows that he has small influence in making the laws.

Not a few of those who write upon the subject would have us think that politics is not his province; that the farmer's place is on the farm, his work the tilling of the soil, and that to the intellectual and monied class belongs the ability and therefore the right to construct the laws and "take care of the country." Too long have the farmers by their conduct, if not in reality, consented to this state of things; but those good days of propriety are gone. The farmer of to-day insists upon meddling with politics, and even demands that those who legislate shall recognize his existence and the agricultural interests of the country. These interests have to some extent been recognized and these demands partially considered. That this is true is either directly or indirectly due to the farmer's agitation. In even so short a time have good results to the farmer followed the work of the organization.

Not only in financial and political affairs will he derive benefit from the association, but in intellectual as well as in social life will good results surely follow. He has been aroused and brought to think, to realize his position and attempt to find means to better it. He sees the politician controlling legislation for the benefit of capitalists, trusts, and combines, favoring the few at the expense of the many and particularly at the expense of the farmer. He finds that upon the owners of real estate falls the great burden of the taxes of the country; that the railroad monopolies by their high shipping rates make it impossible for him to realize a fair profit on his products; in short, that he is oppressed by every organization of capital and by all political schemes. He intends to meet organization with organization.

With strengthened interests in legislation comes a desire for better information, a more intimate acquaintance with political economy and the principles of good government, the wish to be able to meet the lawyer on his own ground,—in truth, to be better informed than he, for, to begin with, the farmer has that experience and knowledge which the city man can not acquire. In this distinctive fact lies the trouble. The men who legislate know nothing of or care nothing for the needs of the farmer. All he means to them is a vote more or a vote less. He is congratulated when prices are high and argued with when they are low. Those men who have for their sole object increase of profits and those who favor class legislation are withdrawing from the

organization, which leaves the permanent element that is striving to better the condition and raise the plane of the farmer's life. With these aims in view the farmers have arranged a course of study in farming economics and general subjects on the Chautauqua plan, hoping to become better acquainted with their own needs and the needs of their country.

Once started on the road of study we find that the outlook broadens and includes that all-round culture more easily obtained in the city than in the country, but just as valuable to the farmer's family as to their more favorably situated cousins. The isolation which has perhaps been the greatest hindrance to the farmer's growth is in a measure overcome. In their study of social and political topics in the local organization the members have the advantage which comes from numbers, the wider range of thought, the more varied experience.

The conventions also have their educational value, bringing together, as they do, men of varying grades of ability from different sections of the country, with different casts of thought and inherited tendencies, giving them the opportunity to discuss the questions of especial value to themselves from different points of view as well as in the light of their common interest. The capable men are recognized and intrusted with offices and duties, and the less fortunate are stimulated to effort.

Already we see the beneficial effects of this uprising in the animated interest taken by the press and the people in subjects formerly unheeded. The people of the cities are being made to see the wrongs and injustice suffered by the class upon whom they are dependent for wealth, prosperity, and even the very necessities of life. They are beginning to feel that a change must come in the management of the interests of the tillers of the soil, or farming will sink to so low a state as to be engaged in only by foreigners and the lowest class of the country, falling sooner or later to the condition of serfdom.

If we take a glance at the history of the great reforms we see that they have originated with the oppressed,—have emanated from below upward. Where have we in history an example of the class benefited by the then-existing state of things adopting broader views and more equitable measures? It is only when resistance becomes so strong as to threaten their interests that we find them listening to the appeals of the common people.

The permanence of the Alliance, the effect of this reform, must depend upon its ability to accomplish its two-fold purpose: First, to arouse a public interest in the condition of the farmer, and secure for him political recognition and financial fairness; second, to develop the farmer himself and incite him to intellectual exertion and efforts in the way of social culture, to lead him to a higher, broader, more beautiful life. We shall find that the results depend not so much upon legislation as upon enlightenment.

NEWTON L. BUNNELL.

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#### A TIME TO BE OUT OF DOORS.

I WONDER what most people think "out doors" was intended for any way? To be avoided, one would think, judging by the way they appear to shun it on every possible occasion. The business man comes down to his hurried breakfast, takes his carriage at the door or his street car or railway